ordingly, the retail issue price for distribution through Public Distribution System has been fixed as under:

Effetive from	Rs. per kg.
1-12-1985	4.80
15-12-1986	4.85
1-1-1988	5.10

The prices of non-levy sugar are governed by the market forces of demand and supply. These have been generally steady for the last three years. In the last few weeks, there has been some increase due to speculative tendencies. Government has already initiated measures to contain this price increase.

Investment in rural sector

1362. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:
SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Economic Planners, Social Scientists, Administrators and Voluntary Agencies engaged in Rural upliftment have suggested for more investment in the rural sector and emphasized that this should be as far as possible oriented to generate employment and income on a substantial basis;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) whether any action has been taken by Government in this regard and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) Yes, Sir. Various types of suggestions have been made for strengthening the poverty alleviation programmes including a suggestion to the effect that more investment need be made in these programmes.

(b) and (c) The Government on its own has been making enhanced allocations for investment in rural sector since the beginning of the current Plan. Against the Seventh Plan outlay of Rs. 6105.89 crores, the expenditure during the first three years (1985—88) of he Plan and the budget allocation for 1988-89 adds up to Rs. 7888.50 crores. The Seventh Plan outlay for employment generation programmes of National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Gurantee Programme (RLEGP) was Rs. 2994.59 crores. Against that, the expenditure in 1985-88 and allocation for 1988-89 adds up to Rs. 4837.29 crores. The expenditure/allocation in the first four years of the Plan is thus 161.53 per cent of the entire plan allocation.

Locust invasion in the country

1363. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:
SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the Times of India" of the 27th June, 1988 wherein it has been stated that intensive spraying has failed to halt a plague of desert locusts which is the biggest in thirty years in Africa.

(b) whether it is also a fact that this locusts invasion has already swept through not only Africa but also crossing the Red Sea may reach India within a year; and

(c) if so, whether Government have made any arrangement for the likely locusts attack in the country and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per the reports of Food and Agriculture Organisation, locusts have

crossed the North and Western Africa and reached Sudan and there is a possibility of some groups of locusts reaching India from the west.

(c) (i) Constant vigilance is being kept on locust activity in the Scheduled Desert Area;

(ii) Regular interaction is being maintained between the Locust Control Organisations of India, Pakistan and the FAO;

(iii) The State Governments concerned have been alerted;

(iv) Locust Warning Organisation has been geared up through mobilisation of manpawer, vehicles, equipment, pesticides etc.; and

(v) A detailed contingency plan has been drawn up for the deployment of men and material at startegic locations to tackle any emergent situation.

1364. [*Transferred to the 9th August, 1988*].

Recruitment of handicapped in Central Services

1365. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated a special time bound Programme to recruit handicapped persons in Central Services recently;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the percentage fixed in this regard; and

(c) whether any guidelines and instructions have been issued to the various departments to expedite the recruitment in favour of such persons?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUMATI ORAON): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of India have reserved 3 per cent vacancies for the physically handicapped in Group C & D posts in Central Government Ministries/Deptts. and cooperable posts in Central Government Public Sector Undertakings. The reservations are 1 per cent each for the blind, deaf and for the orthopaedically handicapped. Special recruitment of blind and deaf persons has been done against backlog of vacancies available in Delhi in Central Government Ministries/Deptts. in respect of Group C & D posts.

An attempt is being made to fill up the backlog of vacancies in Offices outside Delhi by 31.12.1988 in respect of the blind and the deaf.

(c) Guidelines and instructions have been issued from time to time to various Ministries/Departments to expedite the recruitment of the handicapped.

Promotion of Cashew Nut Cultivation

1366. DR. ABRAR AHMED KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up a Cashew Nut Board to promote Cashew Nut Cultivation, processing and export as an integrated operation in view of the potential of this high value crop; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) No decision has been taken as yet to set up a Cashewnut Board.

(b) The question does not arise.

Analysis of working of AIR and Doordarshan

1367. SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether any critical analysis with regard to the functioning of the AIR and Doordarshan has been made to know how far the official media are fulfilling their role in projecting the views of the